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New Ethics Book for the 21st-Century Pharmacist

CEDARVILLE, OHIO -- Pharmacists are being valued more and more for their knowledge and skills and have been able to provide a wider range of health care options, not just preparing medicines. These new opportunities for pharmacists require intensive ethics training, and Cedarville University's Dr. Dennis Sullivan is leading that effort by authoring a new textbook on the topic.

Sullivan, director for the Center for Bioethics and professor of pharmacy practice at Cedarville University, has taught courses in biology, anatomy, law and ethics for more than 20 years. After struggling to find an ethics textbook that was neither too philosophical or too simplistic, Sullivan decided to write his own book on pharmacy ethics: "Ethics in Pharmacy Practice: A Practical Guide." It is slated for release in 2020.

Sullivan is writing the book with Dr. Douglas Anderson, chair of pharmacy practice; Dr. Justin Cole, vice chair of pharmacy practice; five student research assistants; and an academic pharmacist consultant.

In the original book proposal, Sullivan wrote, "This book is a normative approach to ethics for the Pharm.D. student as well as for the busy practicing clinician. This text presents a clear-cut pathway for resolving ethical dilemmas, based on foundational principles and critical thinking."

"Ethics has only recently been added to pharmacy curricula, which have primarily been focused on state and federal law," said Anderson. "Lack of ethics training has led to some pharmacists being faced with ethical dilemmas for which they have been poorly prepared. We hope our textbook will give our students and alumni better ethical training and preparation for dilemmas they may face in their future practices."

"Pharmacists have long taken an oath of professionalism when entering the profession, agreeing to uphold high standards when serving the medication needs of the public," said Cole. "However, not all pharmacists have a full understanding of the ethical principles that undergird these commitments. I want our students and all pharmacists to be ethically fluent, prepared to navigate difficult situations they face with knowledge, confidence and a commitment to always doing the right thing for each patient they serve."

"Our textbook will be accessible and will address normative, noncontroversial ethics," said Sullivan. "We want to give pharmacists the confidence to make decisions on principles and have a reason for their choices."

After earning an undergraduate degree in chemistry, Sullivan earned an M.D. from Case Western Reserve University. He then completed five years of training in general surgery before serving in the

army for two years. After his discharge, Sullivan and his family were missionaries in Haiti, the West Indies and then the Central African Republic.

When civil war broke out, Sullivan and his family were forced to return to the United States, and he joined the faculty at Cedarville University, and has now taught for more than 23 years. He earned a master's degree in ethics in 2004, and in 2006, he developed the Cedarville Center for Bioethics, which he continues to direct. In 2014, Sullivan has been a part of the Cedarville School of Pharmacy faculty teaching ethics and law, helping prepare the next generation of clinical pharmacists.

Sullivan has authored numerous articles in peer-reviewed journals, especially on the issues of human personhood and clinical ethics.

Located in southwest Ohio, Cedarville University is an accredited, Christ-centered, Baptist institution with an enrollment of 4,193 undergraduate, graduate and online students in more than 150 areas of study. Founded in 1887, Cedarville is recognized nationally for its authentic Christian community, rigorous academic programs, strong graduation and retention rates, accredited professional and health science offerings and leading student satisfaction ratings. For more information about the University, visit www.cedarville.edu.